Reviews


The study of Spanish American Independence is changing. As Anthony McFarlane recently commented, it is no longer considered in isolation, but as ‘an episode in the transition from an ancien régime to a modern nation-state, inaugurated under the Bourbons and completed with the liberal triumph in the 1860s’, bringing new groups into politics and generating new visions of political and social life. Jaime E. Rodríguez is a leading interpreter of modern trends, and his latest book, combining sound scholarship with radical reappraisal, will appeal to specialist and student alike. Here they will find new data and fresh signposts, without the loss of Bourbon reforms, Creole-peninsular rivalry, and familiar grits. The author signals his intentions in the chapter headings and organisation, eschewing the traditional accounts of colonial grievances, followed by rebellions, counter-revolution, and ultimate liberation, in favour of a different set of categories. He introduces the eighteenth century and pre-Independence not by presenting contrasting ideological movements in Spain and America, but by arguing for a common reaction within the whole Hispanic world to the political and intellectual challenges of the age. The result was that in 1808 ‘Spain and Spanish America responded in the same way to the collapse of the Monarchy. The people of both areas drew upon common concepts and sought similar solutions to the evolving crisis.’ There were some differences, of course, but Independence was not one of them: ‘autonomy’ was the most that Americans demanded. The next chapter, in logical progression, considers the birth of representative government through the convocation of a parliament in Cadiz, the first popular elections in America (ironically, less ‘popular’ among the insurgents than among the royalists), and the growing divisions among the autonomists. This leads not to a war of independence against Spain but to civil wars within America ‘that pitted supporters of the Spanish national government against the American juntas, the capitals against the provinces, the elites against one another, and urban against rural groups’. The author plots the growing map of autonomy not according to mere geographical divisions but by the interplay of factors from Spain and local conditions. Thus he maintains the Hispanic framework of the book, and it is not until the final chapters that the concept of independence, or emancipation as the author prefers, is allowed and diverse regional movements admitted.

In addition to the dominant concept of the unity of the Spanish world and the continuity of Spanish culture which the author skilfully constructs and develops throughout his book, he also makes a number of particular contributions to the study of Independence. The work of the Cortes of Cadiz and the significance of the Constitution of 1812 are given a new and well-documented role in the
Independence process, while the study of representative government and popular elections are presented as an integral part of the story. At the same time the author recognises the limitations of the Constitution, which offered Americans freedom but not equality. In the debate over ideological origins the author comes down on the side of a specific Hispanic contribution to the ideas of Independence: ‘Spain and the new nations of America developed a unique political culture based not on foreign models but on their own traditions and experience.’ Not all his arguments in favour of continuity are convincing. He maintains that Spanish America was not a colony of Spain but an integral part of the Monarchy; consequently Independence was not an anticolonial movement. The idea is not new. Fifty years ago the Argentine historian Ricardo Levene published a book, Las Indias no eran colonias (Buenos Aires, 1951), which presented a similar thesis and which some historians thought was excessively legalistic. Rodríguez is more persuasive, but even so he runs the risk of ignoring three centuries of the pacto colonial and the reality of economic and social relations between Spain and America, relations which he suggests ‘functioned well’ compared with the fate of Spanish America after independence. A challenging conclusion.

Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London


This book provides a usefully succinct summary of the state of writing about business history in the larger countries of Latin America. The editors have themselves written two of the chapters, Dávila on Colombia and Miller on Peru. They have assembled a skilled team to write about Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela. With variations imposed by the differing stages of development of business history in each of the countries and by the priorities of each contributor, the chapters follow the same general approach: a survey of the cumulative bibliography, a sketch of the main themes, comment on the available sources and an agenda for further work. There is an extensive bibliography, helpfully arranged by country and (with the exception of Mexico) by the main themes.

The contributors are at pains to emphasise the newness of business history as a distinct discipline in Latin America, linked to a lack of resources and the indefinite boundaries with other fields of study. The book itself is not wholly new. It was conceived in 1992 at a meeting convened by Dávila in Bogotá and first published in Spanish in 1996 as Empresa e historia en América Latina. The English-language edition has been revised, expanded and updated to include publications to the end of 1997.

All of the contributors argue for an objective approach to research and writing on business, an ‘urgent need to lay the ghosts...[that] see the businessman as someone who should be eulogised or demonised, rather than studied critically.’ This contrasts with the pervasive influence over an earlier generation of CEPAL
and other dogmas. As Colin Lewis puts it in the context of Brazil, ‘cepalino’ analyses were both descriptive and prescriptive and, at the same time, historical and predictive, leaving little scope for entrepreneurial initiatives that failed to fit the structuralist mould.

There are many common themes that recur in each country: the local business elites and kinship groups, their brief successes and relative failures; the ‘imperialism’ of foreign investors (widely studied because their records are more generally accessible); the ebb and flow of state intervention; the role of state companies; the role of immigrants. Increasingly business historians have come to realise that they should not be deceived by national boundaries, when there are evident regional differences, marked by natural resource, geographical advantage or a subtle mutation of culture. The most elusive prize is to explain the ‘entrepreneurial factor’: what was the special magic that allowed generations of antioqueños to succeed in business? What did their neighbours miss?

The most provocative of the chapters is the essay on Venezuela by Ruth Capriles (also author of Diccionario de la corrupción en Venezuela) and Marisol Rodríguez de Gonzalo. They stress the crucial, but difficult, area of study in ‘the intricate relationship between economic influence and political power’, particularly in Venezuela where ‘the state has been the homo economicus’. They go on to describe the practical obstacles to research, ‘the distrust, fear, prejudice, changing alliances and personalities who wish their role to be either minimised or praised’. They note the invisibility of capital and its true ownership, the barriers to prying eyes through the anonymity of bearer shares and the use of front men to shield not just offshore capital ‘but also national figures like presidents and civil servants, or shy and retiring businessmen who wish to avoid provoking social envy or resentment.’

To this reviewer, as a practitioner of business in the region, it is a rare treat if the empresario in Latin America commits to paper his true thoughts on major business decisions. Records and papers abound, but the escritura sworn before the notary and deposited in the commercial register (and as such key material for the historian) records what has been decided, not why, nor the fraught negotiations leading to it. Accounting records have become in the hispanic tradition luxuriantly detailed, but they require expert and often creative interpretation, especially in periods of high inflation, to achieve even an approximation of the true and fair view to which auditors put their names. This explains the emphasis given by Rory Miller to the call for the researcher to develop personal relationships and trust, which may deliver the keys to a more realistic understanding of the true nature of business in Latin America.

This book is valuable for what it is – a bibliography with expert commentary. But it is tantalising for the number and variety of glimpses into subjects and debates which cannot be developed in the limited space of this volume. It is a useful tool and a stimulus to a vast agenda of further work. As Luis Ortega puts it ‘there is a whole history yet to be written’.

MAURICE DE BUNSEN

This slim volume breaks new ground. Decho and Diamond provide short biographies with London references for a selection of leading Latin Americans who have lived in London in the last two centuries. They have divided it into three periods – pre-Independence, Independence to the Second World War, and contemporary.

In an admirably concise introduction Rory Miller argues that, apart perhaps for the Independence era, historians have tended to neglect the role of the relatively small but distinguished group of Latin Americans resident in London. In his view, during the nineteenth century they played a major role in transmitting liberal values back home. Recently interest in Latin American culture in the UK has been much stimulated by the presence of Latin American writers, artists and musicians.

Dr Miller analyses the changing character of the Latin American community in London. The pre-independence period saw opponents of Spanish rule, like Miranda and Viscardo y Guzmán, encouraged by the British authorities. Their presence drew others, O’Higgins and later Bolivar and San Martín, to London. When they returned home to lead the struggle others, among them Bello and Zea, were in London trying to ensure continued British support.

After Independence some leaders who lost out in the immediate post-Independence struggles – Iturbide and Santander – came to London. British recognition brought many leading Latin Americans to London as diplomats and their none-too-onerous duties allowed the writers among them, including the poet José Joaquín de Olmedo, the playwright Manuel Eduardo Gorostiza and the novelist Alberto Blest Gana, to take advantage of the opportunities literary London offered.

Businessmen from Latin America were drawn to London, especially from 1860 as trade increased dramatically. The Viscount Mauá was followed by the Rebouça and Prado brothers and Francisco Cisneros.

The exiles continued to arrive, Juan Manuel de Rosas and his daughter, Manuelita, being perhaps the most controversial. Also the Brazilians Rui Barbosa and Joaquim Nabuco, and the Bolivian Felix Avelino Aramayo, who pursued his business interests from the city. So too did the Peruvian President, Augusto Bernardino Leguía, early in the twentieth century.

Dr Miller sees the presence of the writers Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa and Guillermo Cabrera Infante, as well as artists like Fernando Montes, the cinematographer Alberto Cavalcanti, and the musicians Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso as greatly stimulating British interest in Latin America and its culture. This, for Miller, is a great change: in the nineteenth century the traffic in ideas, technology and finance was all one way; at the end of the twentieth century it was very much two way with Latin American literature, art, cinema and football much appreciated.

If anything Dr Miller underplays the change. Salsa and merengue do not figure, for instance, which may reflect the conservative estimate of the Latin American community given in an Appendix – 17,424 in the 1991 census. A recent study puts the Colombian community alone at 60–70,000.
The individual biographical entries which form the main body of the work successfully combine the career and London connections, sometimes illustrated with fascinating quotes. The London stays are often well documented with dates, addresses and activities. The entries represent both a useful reference source and essays that can be dipped into for enjoyment. Soledad Acosta de Samper, for instance, gives a vivid description of a grimy, smoky London in 1860, with streets full of mud and noise very similar to the contemporary views of Henry Adams. Her view of the freedom enjoyed by middle class women is fascinating. There is a long and moving quote from Carlos Fuentes on the difference between the London he first visited in 1950 and the London of 1996. But I cannot refrain from quoting his reason for preferring London as a place to write: ‘Nada ni nadie me distrae en la capital británica. La gente es fría, la comida mala y el clima espantoso.’

The choice of Latin Americans included will inevitably fail to satisfy some. It strikes me as odd, for instance, to include Manuela Rosas de Terrero and not her father, the dictator Juan Manuel Rosas. If I have a criticism it is that for an academic publication there are too many typographical errors, especially dates, some worthy of the Grauniad with Vicente Rocafuerte leaving Britain ‘on 24 December 1826 and arriving in Mexico in February 1927’. There are other less excusable errors. Rosas’s arrival in London in 1812 is described as causing problems for the government of the Duke of Northumberland (sic).

It would, however, be churlish, to dwell on these minor faults. This book is a very welcome initiative which will surely inspire others.

Keith Morris

Hans Siebers, ‘We Are the Children of the Mountain’: Creolization and Modernization among the Q’eqchi’es (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1999), pp. xiv + 196, $25.00; £14.95; NLG 37.50; pb.

Hans Siebers’ doctoral research, carried out in Alta Verapaz in 1991 and 1992 at the invitation of the local Catholic diocese, focuses on how the Maya-Q’eqchi’ of Guatemala deal with an increasingly changing and globalised world. The leitmotif of his monograph is ‘to relate the traits of the Q’eqchi’es social reality to the meanings that are attributed to the concept of modernization in the literature’ (p. 157). Drawing on cognitive anthropology and neo-Weberian sociology, Siebers aims to determine whether the Q’eqchi’es are experiencing a linear process of modernisation, or whether they have ‘found specific ways to deal with pre-modern, originally modern and contemporary modern elements’ (p. 16): a selective and functional appropriation of ‘pre-modern’ and ‘modern’ features which Siebers defines as ‘creolization’.

In order to assess whether the Q’eqchi’es were ‘modernising’ or ‘creolising’, Siebers collected field data in what he describes as four ‘very typical’ Q’eqchi’ communities (p. 38), using survey techniques to determine levels of market integration or relative isolation, the number of Evangelical churches, and the kind of pastoral policies applied by the Catholic church. As a result, the main body of the text presents a rich and detailed description of the different religious and economic characteristics of the Alta Verapaz region. This includes the role, articulation and contradictions of local indigenous practices and institutions with
intervening agents such as the different churches, non-indigenous landlords and merchants, state and para-statal agencies, the army and NGOs.

However, although Siebers explicitly rejects evolutionist modernisation paradigms, his analysis remains rooted in dualist approaches. The majority of Q’eqchi’ customary practices and institutions are designated as ‘pre-modern’, while external non-indigenous characteristics are located in the ‘modern’ field, a questionable framework at best. In addition, while he criticises modernisation theory, stating that it ‘has been used as an ethnocentric prescription for social transformation in non-Western areas’ (p. 7), his own approach exhibits much Western parochialism. The book is full of statements such as: ‘...the ways in which the Q’eqchi’es deal with their religion and economy express a strongly associative character and very little rationality’ (p. 160); and ‘[e]xisting networks of association and interpretation were clearly inadequate to provide the Q’eqchi’es with a satisfying answer as to what to think of me’ (p. 163–4). Perhaps more importantly, the selection of data according to ‘universal’ paradigms of modernisation tends to leave other national and international elements shaping the social and cultural responses of the Q’eqchi’ out of the equation. So, for example, Siebers has little interest in analysing the effects of the civil war, counterinsurgency, political violence and militarism that engulfed the region, despite his assertion that ‘[t]he army is without doubt the most powerful intervening agency.’ (p. 152). His rationale for omitting variables related to the armed conflict is that only a small number of Q’eqchi’ communities directly suffered militarism and violence. Such explanations are, however, unconvincing for those who have worked in the region during this period: the effects of militarism and political violence can be observed almost everywhere, even after the negotiated end of the armed conflict in December 1996.

Ultimately one is left with the impression that the modernising paradigm framing Siebers’ research is applied almost for its own sake, leading to a highly selective choice of data from the field. According to his analysis, ‘[t]he agenda set by modernization is complemented by the creolizing “agency” of the Q’eqchi’es themselves’ (p. 158). One wonders whether the application of such a methodology would not lead to almost identical conclusions for practically any indigenous group in the Third World (i.e. that processes of change include both elements of imposition and elements of adaptation and appropriation). In other words, analysis of the particularities of the Q’eqchi’es, and of the subjective dimensions of the processes of change outlined here, are largely absent. Although we are presented with much valuable information about the context in which the Q’eqchi’es operate, we do not necessarily understand their ‘agency’ any better.

University of Manchester

Carlos Flores

James Howe, A People Who Would Not Kneel: Panama, the United States, and the San Blas Kuna (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), pp. x + 390, £42.95, £15.50 pb.; $55.00, $19.95 pb.

Historians have often criticised anthropologists for writing histories that are insufficiently researched and overly theoretical. Among its other achievements, James Howe’s book will convince the most sceptical historian that an anthropologist can write a first-class history. Howe’s archival research is exhaustive. Indeed, considering the immense difficulties in studying early
twentieth-century Latin American indigenous groups, this book’s research is outstanding.

The narrative begins at the turn of the century when the USA carved out an important chunk of Colombia and created Panama. Howe makes the argument that Panamanian nationalists, wounded by US domination and unable to create a strong repressive apparatus, were therefore more intent on the cultural conquest of the Kuna using limited forms of coercion. In a penetrating analysis, he examines the Panamanian campaign to acculturate the Kuna during the era of Liberal party rule, 1915–1925. As elsewhere in Latin America, liberalism appealed to mestizo and mulatto lower classes and fostered an inclusive national identity. At the same time, however, they could not tolerate a people who specifically rejected that identity. Howe synthesises the cultural assault as follows: ‘Ever since April 1919, when Belisario Porras decreed that Nargana schoolgirls could no longer wear nose rings, it was clear that the government’s prime goal was ethnocide, the destruction of a culture. Its agents would not be content until they had eradicated the “semi-savage,” “barbaric” customs of the Kuna, turning them into good Spanish-speaking Panamanians…’ (p. 177). The government attacked every marker of Kuna ethnicity: ranging from all forms of Kuna dress, to nude bathing and to the use of chicha. Moreover, the government took the offensive, imposing national forms. Not surprisingly, the government imposed Hispanic surnames and established schools where only Spanish could be spoken. But they also imposed social dancing on the Kuna; police made attendance at dances obligatory. For Howe, this odd form of cultural assault aimed, to a degree, to foster Panamanian identity through the tamborito dance: the Kuna were encouraged to dance the fox-trot with touching between the dance partners, aiming to drive a wedge between Kuna elders and the younger generation and between men and women. Dancing and the occasional marriage of Panamanian police with Kuna women dramatically heightened elder males’ sexual anxiety, compounded by their ardent defense of ethnic endogamy.

Howe’s analysis of Kuna resistance to these political-cultural assaults is equally penetrating, particularly with regard to the different Kuna factions. Some groups attempted to maintain ties to Colombia (some flew the Colombian flag until 1920); others resisted less dramatically. The combination of a steady increase in the cultural assault on Kuna ethnic emblems and boundaries on the one hand, and a fortuitous entry of a US adventurer into their society, on the other, precipitated an armed rebellion in 1925. The rebellion lasted two weeks and resulted in the deaths of 30 Panamanian policemen, non-Indians, and Kuna collaborators with the authorities. Their initial demand was for an ‘independent republic of Tule’ that would become a US protectorate, but during the negotiations mediated by the USA the Indian leaders proved willing to recognise Panamanian authority in return for substantial autonomy. In addition to amnesty, the Kuna demanded the removal of the governor, the removal of police and their replacement by Indian authorities, and guarantees that their cultural practices would be respected fully. The Panamanian government acceded to all the demands, except that of amnesty which they tacitly accepted. There was no serious armed retaliation against the Indians.

Although Howe makes it clear that the Kuna would have revolted regardless, the presence of Richard Marsh provided a sense that the US government would support them, and it probably influenced the US decision to mediate and thus encourage the avoidance of large-scale Panamanian repression.
explorations on behalf of a rubber company, Marsh had become fascinated with the Kuna and, in particular, with some albinos whom he thought represented a race of ‘white’ Indians. He took some of the albinos on tour to the USA and attempted to raise public and governmental concern about the general situation of the Kuna. Howe convincingly argues that Marsh’s devotion to, and fantasies about, the Indians was rooted in nativist anxieties about immigrants in the USA. Howe suggests a link between that mentality and Marsh’s fear that the Kuna were under assault by blacks, whom he loathed, and by mixed bloods, whom he rejected on scientific racist principle. Moreover, he places the Kuna issue in the context of bitter debates in the new anthropological profession between Franz Boas and his pro-eugenics, scientific racist opponents with whom Marsh allied himself. Unfortunately, Howe devotes five chapters to Marsh’s exploits in Panama and the USA and as a result the book loses some of its narrative punch and analytical thrust.

Howe has also chosen to avoid direct engagement with theoretical issues, but the thrust of his work does enter into the ‘constructionist’ versus ‘cultural survival’ debate in anthropology. In its broadest terms, constructionists view culture not as a collection of discrete traits but rather as mutable forms of identity. In its extreme formulation, cultures cannot be destroyed because collective identities will always become reconfigured. Howe’s narrative, however, strikingly reveals a people battling for their cultural survival without reducing that struggle to a set of discrete, authentic traits. Moreover, he places that struggle in a well-etched historical context and provides a dialectical view of the interaction between the dominant and subaltern cultures. Yet his contribution to this debate would have been more significant with more direct engagement. Howe does make it strikingly clear how and why the Panamanian authorities sought to suppress Kuna cultural markers and why the Kuna were prepared to die in defense of their ethnic boundaries. Yet, if he had placed the Kuna history in more of a comparative framework, he might have been able to generalise his findings. Why, for example, did the Kuna offer such direct resistance whereas other groups engaged in less frontal resistance and accommodated to the dominant culture? He also underscores, pace Spivak, that the Kuna did project a subaltern voice (p. 8). Yet, in the defining moment of the rebellion, they did use Marsh to draw up their ‘declaration of independence.’ Similarly if, as Howe convincingly argues, the Kuna could, to a significant extent, set their own agendas, why did other indigenous groups in Central America fail to survive the homogenizing onslaught of liberalism and mestizaje?

A People Who Would Not Kneel is one of the finest ethno-historical works dealing with twentieth-century indigenous groups in Latin America and as such deserves a wide readership. It is a remarkable achievement, worthy of the many years that Howe pursued his goal.

Indiana University

JEFFREY L. GOULD


This accessible and interesting text tells the story of a poor highland community in twentieth-century Panama: Loma Bonita in Coce province to the west of Panama City. Having worked in this village since 1972, the author is well placed...
to pursue her objective of exploring the impact of political, economic and social change on the everyday lives of a small segment of Panama’s low-income population. Resisting ‘commonly-held images of passive peasants’, Rudolf’s concerns are with examining the dynamic interactions between structural transformations and popular struggles. Her detailed knowledge of Loma Bonita’s families provides the reader with powerful, personalised insights into the implications of capitalism and globalisation at the grassroots.

After an informative, yet concise, introduction to Panamanian history, the substantive chapters deal with the three decades during which Rudolf herself conducted research in Loma Bonita. At the start of this period, in 1970, almost half of Panama’s population had settled in urban areas. In the wake of a turning of national economic development strategy to international services and agricultural exports, isolated rural communities such as Loma Bonita found themselves increasingly unable to sustain subsistence production. As part and parcel of supplementing their resources with wage labour, most families ‘made cities and towns an extension of their rural world’. This had major implications for family organisation, such as an increase in grandmother-headed households as women with children migrated in larger numbers to urban-based domestic service employment.

Recognising the need to garner support for its internationally-funded modernisation projects, the populist military regime of Omar Torrijos during the 1970s launched development strategies that were nominally ‘participatory’, but which in actuality were authoritarian and undemocratic. Yet although major attempts were made to draw-in the dispossessed, Rudolf observes that ‘Cultivating the art of passive non-compliance helped the majority in Torrijos’ programmes in Loma Bonita to involve themselves minimally – just enough to avoid government reprisals’ (p. 137). Those interested in participatory development should find especially insightful Rudolf’s account of the attempt by students at the Institute of Inter-American Cooperatives to establish a credit cooperative in Loma Bonita (pp. 136–8).

The regime of Manuel Noriega in the 1980s is a period in which Rudolf sees the inhabitants of Loma Bonita becoming ‘post peasants in global capitalism’. Against a background of global and national economic and political crises, the ‘Lost Decade’ saw Panamanian people working harder than ever to earn a living (p. 149). As coffee farms progressively declined in Loma Bonita diversification continued and household livelihood strategies intensified. ‘An ideal was to have numerous members who worked in a variety of economic activities, or niches, and then shared the benefits of this “little bit from everywhere” within their kin network’ (p. 168). Levels of poverty and mounting insecurity provided fertile ground for the spread of Catholic Base Community Movements such as the Delegates of the Word, which Rudolf makes the subject of Chapter 8.

By the 1990s, the era of the global economy, life on Loma Bonita was far different to what it had been twenty years previously. Families were fragmented, people were less in command of their own lives, and gender and class inequalities had widened. By the same token, Rudolf stresses the indomitable spirit of hope, if not optimism, shared by many residents, the continued reciprocity among kinsfolk, and the fact that people still had small openings for choice and action.

Aside from the colourful tracing of community responses to, and participation in, economic and social change, Rudolf adds an appendix in which she details some of the problems and advantages of conducting long-term ethnographic field
research. By the end of the book the reader has a sense of knowing this community well, getting a real sense of common ethical dilemmas of Northern research in the South, as well as its gender, class and power dimensions. There is also some discussion of the practical difficulties involved in participant observation in remote rural locations.

Although told primarily as a story, Rudolf manages to locate several of her themes within a wider theoretical brief, including the gender implications of economic development, the limitations of community participation, the role of kinship networks in livelihood strategies, and the place of religion in disadvantaged communities. There is as much here for social scientists in general as for Latin American studies scholars in particular. Although fewer publishers are willing to risk monographs, Panama’s Poor brings to bear the importance of the case study in fulfilling a variety of needs for the researcher, teacher and student, and in a fashion that makes academic reading a more digestible and pleasurable experience.

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Sylvia Chant


Edmund T. Gordon’s Disparate Diasporas is a theoretically rich, historically detailed and politically committed study of Nicaragua’s Atlantic coast Creole community. Like Roger Lancaster’s Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua (University of California Press, 1994), Gordon’s exploration of the reality of the lived experience of the revolution adds significant depth to the more common top-down political analyses.

The Sandinista Revolution’s troubled relations with the indigenous populations of Nicaragua’s Atlantic Coast attracted attention across the political and scholarly spectrum. Clearly, vast economic, historical, cultural and political differences separate the Atlantic from the rest of Nicaragua, and the Sandinistas did not evoke the kind of popular support there that they did elsewhere in the country. Several anthropologists (Bernard Nietschmann, Charles R. Hale) have studied the Miskitu Indian population of the coast but, curiously, before Gordon’s there has been no major study of the Atlantic Coast Creoles.

Disparate Diasporas admirably fills this gap, and several others as well. Most important, theoretically speaking, is Gordon’s engagement with the literature of race and identity in Latin America and in the African Diaspora. Like many others, Gordon departs from the premise that race is not a biological reality but a social construction – constructed in large part by the Creoles themselves, though always in national and international contexts beyond their making. But Gordon goes beyond many other authors in tracing the myriad twists and turns in the ways that racial identity – which Gordon sees as growing out of a ‘constructed cultural politics’ (xii) – is both conditioned and created.

Creoles constructed their cultural politics in the context of, first, what Gordon calls ‘Anglo hegemony,’ including British colonialism, the Moravian Church and US corporations operating on the coast; second, the Hispanic/mestizo Pacific
Nicaraguan people and the different Nicaraguan governments that have exerted varying degrees of control over the coast; and third, the African diaspora as a politico-cultural phenomenon. The ‘disparate diasporas’ of the title refers to two major strands in Creole ethnic identification: as descendants of English colonisers, or as part of the global African diaspora. But, Gordon argues, Creoles have, with varying degrees of deliberateness, manipulated and called upon these elements of identity to respond to different historical circumstances.

The first chapters of the book trace the historical emergence of a Creole politics and identity based on accommodation to, and resistance against, the two competing hegemonies on the Atlantic coast, Anglo and Nicaraguan. Both African and Anglo diasporic identities could be called upon to resist these two powers. Creoles also reached into their history and drew out elements that seemed relevant to understanding and acting in the present, so Gordon’s discussion of the history is not simply a narrative of past events, but a discussion of how today’s Creole population interprets these events.

For most readers, the most provocative chapter may be the final one, which carries the story into the period of the Sandinista revolution, and presents yet another original argument. A politics of resistance, based on African diasporic identity and what Gordon calls ‘creole populism’ or ‘cultural/racial politics’ attracted many Creoles in the early days of the Nicaraguan revolution. This populist, cultural/racial politics led many Creoles to greet the Sandinista triumph with great enthusiasm, believing that it shared their economic goals of redistribution of resources away from foreign companies and large landholders into the hands of small farmers. Criticism of the Sandinistas, when it occurred, was based on what Creoles saw as the revolution’s racist and internal colonialist policies towards the coast. Mestizo Sandinistas, however, failed to sympathise with the racial/cultural basis upon which Creoles framed their support, and saw it as a threat to their goal of ‘nationalising’ the coast. It was not until this strand of Creole populism had significantly declined in the mid-1980s, to be replaced by a more Anglo-oriented critique of the Sandinistas which followed the US line of attacking them as communist, anti-democracy and anti-capitalist, that the Sandinistas started to move towards a racial/cultural definition of the Atlantic coast ‘problem’ and to seek solutions in those terms. By this time, however, it was too late: most Creoles were opposing the Sandinistas on political and economic grounds, and their ‘Anglo’ identification with the USA led them into alliance with the Contras. Thus the tragedy of the Atlantic coast was one of disjuncture as much as of fundamental difference, at least as far as the Creole population was concerned.

More attention to the non-Creole populations of the coast would have provided a more complete picture of the tumultuous events there. Nevertheless, this book makes an important and fascinating contribution to our knowledge of Nicaragua’s Atlantic coast and the Sandinista revolution.

Salem State College

Aviva Chomsky

Between 1900 and 1925 sugar production of the American sugar kingdom (Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico) increased from 0.43 million to 6.75 million (US) tons. By the early 1920s US sugar refiners controlled half of Cuban and Puerto Rican production and nearly all sugar production in the Dominican Republic. Modern mills relied on steam power, vacuum pans, centrifugal machines, the polarscope (for grading of sugar) and private rail networks. At the same time, demand had increased rapidly (per capita sugar production in the USA increased 211 per cent between 1870 and 1930) and after 1900 sugarcane surpassed sugar beets as main raw material for sugar, reversing the 1870–1900 trend.

Ayala’s initial argument is that US investment in the early-twentieth-century Spanish Caribbean resulted in ‘radical social and economic transformation’ and produced ‘a new form of underdevelopment’ that would be based on wage labour, rather than noncapitalist relations (p. 2). The implantation of a specific form of US industrial capitalism, based on vertical integration and supported by tariff policies, created the underdeveloped Spanish Caribbean. Ayala refutes the idea that underdevelopment (undefined here) is inevitable and determined only by the coloniser; rather, ‘underdevelopment’ was ‘a complex process of interaction between metropolitan and colonial social classes’ that was ‘created jointly with local allies’ and could be ‘undone or at least refashioned’ (p. 184).

Ayala soon retreats from his ‘radical transformation’ claim and argues instead for the importance of local differences in conditioning the impact of US investment in sugarcane mills. Although US capital transformed the industrial process of making sugar, planting and harvesting were unchanged and resisted the transformative power of US capital. Ayala argues that population density, state power in land tenure, market integration and the slave emancipation process created ‘differences in agrarian structure’ that ‘persisted and became accentuated during the US colonial period’ (p. 149, 166).

The issue of *colonos* demonstrates the significance of the conceptual gap between ‘radical transformation’ and ‘preexisting conditions’ arguments. In Cuba, the *colonato* as an institution emerged after the abolition of slavery and with the onset of technical changes that encouraged the modern sugarcane mill’s specialisation in the industrial process. *Colonos*, Ayala argues, were a ‘complex and highly differentiated’ group of ‘agricultural entrepreneurs’ (p. 122, 129) and were a major element of ‘preexisting’ features of class and landownership that affected the ability of US capitalists to establish modern sugarcane mills.

Ayala’s evidence (for example, pp. 143, 213–216) suggests considerable interaction between mills and *colonos*. This, in turn, questions the usefulness of ‘radical transformation’ and ‘preexisting conditions’ arguments. If change were radical, we would expect evidence and analysis on the process of altering the *colonato* system in the interests of new sugarcane mills. But only the industrial process changed – in response to technological innovations, US tariff policies and pre-1898 industrial reorganisation. If change were contingent on local conditions, we would expect evidence and analysis on the negotiated process by which US mills secured raw material.
The misplaced explanatory divide between ‘radical transformation’ and ‘local conditions’ might have been avoided if Ayala had targeted the negotiated realm of colono-mill interaction, which would have focused analysis on instances of resistance to US capital (colonos who resisted particular US mills by subverting contracts or diverting sugarcane) or the highly specific nature of US capital (mill managers uninterested in changing how sugarcane is cultivated, only in getting it to the mill for full use of technical innovations). Instead, the colonato is the topic of an unfocused discussion (chapter five) in which Ayala confuses the issue by describing colonos as a ‘just-in-time’ delivery system (an unfortunate parallel with certain present-day manufacturing). Ayala’s own evidence suggests the colonato was a negotiated institution, and its analysis would have better addressed the question of Spanish Caribbean ‘underdevelopment’ than the corporate-business history that dominates half the book. Linkages between US capital and local conditions remain unexplored in detail. In Ayala’s analysis the colonato was the means by which US capital overcame obstacles to accumulation (p. 134), and not a specific category of analysis that would confound the conceptual divide between US imperialism as adapting to local conditions or creating radical change in the Spanish Caribbean.

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Ellis Briggs was described by William Khrem as ‘An impossible young man with a vague resemblance to Groucho Marx and loathsome democratic convictions’. Willa Cather writes somewhere of those people who become more like themselves as they grow older. Perhaps for some the reverse is true? The Ellis Briggs of the posthumously published *Proud Servant* is not the same as the Ellis Briggs of *Farewell to Foggy Bottom* and still less the man *Time* magazine journalist William Khrem described in the 1940s, the militant democrat who together with Spruille Braden took on Trujillo and the other dictators of the Western hemisphere.

Ambassador to seven countries, in a career which started in the 1920s and continued into the 1960s, Briggs saw the Latin American policy of the United States transformed in a variety of ways. Looking back on the trajectory of change, he presented himself in his memoirs as a consistent opponent of a long term trend toward liberalism and bloated bureaucracy.

The Good Neighbour Policy, in Briggs retrospective, became a one-way street with Washington mistakenly encouraging the Latinos to dwell on their rights and their grievances instead of on their opportunities and their obligations. The Alliance for Progress is seen as an invitation to slip a hand into Uncle Sam’s pocket. President Kubitschek’s precursor endeavour, Operação Pan América, was put together after he saw gold in the hills of US self-accusation. Behind it all was a belief that the have-not nations had a right to be developed at the expense of the already developed nations.

Working with Larry Duggan in Washington for three years, Briggs recalls that
they developed a close friendship in spite of what he saw as Larry’s belief that the underdog was always right and his own conviction that the best form of government equalised opportunity so the superior individual could rise by right of demonstrated ability. Acknowledging an American security interest in checking Nazi Germany’s efforts in Latin America, Briggs suggests that support for the ‘forces of altruism’ was more important in the establishment of the Program of Cooperation with American Republics which he saw as a progenitor of foreign aid: ‘a world phenomena eventually costing taxpayers billions of dollars.’

Often favourably impressed with the decency of US objectives, Briggs implies that from Kellogg-Briand through the Alliance for Progress he saw US diplomacy as capable of being guided into counterproductive and guilt-ridden channels by liberal conviction. The military interventions of the first third of the twentieth century were not an expression of any desire for domination or special privileges: ‘When we intervened in the Caribbean, it was to clean up something beyond the local ability to handle, and we departed as soon as we could. During an intervention the people of the country often had better food, more freedom, better health, and more money than they enjoyed before the Marines came, or after the Marines departed.’

Excessive liberal conviction is not apparent in Briggs’ description of US policy toward Cuba in 1933–34. The presidency of Ramón Grau San Martín, after the overthrow of the Machado dictatorship, was not welcome to the US embassy – ‘clearly the first priority was getting rid of Provisional President Grau.’ The question, Briggs notes, was how to mobilise men, money and ideas, without giving the impression that the US government was manipulating the actors. Batista looked promising, but green.

It is not immediately apparent why someone holding such views would challenge Trujillo. In Proud Servant, the extremity of that particular dictator – ‘the most disreputable ruffian in the New World’ – appears to provide much of the answer. At the time, especially in 1944, Briggs looked to emulate his former boss, Ambassador Spruille Braden. Braden, in a nice twist of fate, helped Grau San Martín defeat Fulgencio Batista’s candidate, Carlos Saladrigas, in the 1944 Cuban elections. Offended by Batista’s corruption, and by his close relations with the Cuban Communist Party, Braden publicly insisted that US citizens and corporations on the island not contribute to any candidate in the elections (which he later estimated cost Batista $2 million). Grau’s victory appeared to vindicate Braden’s strategy and the more general antidictatorial measures which he articulated and, fairly successfully, urged Washington to adopt. This victory also left Blas Roca, secretary-general of the Cuban Communist Party, looking for silver linings: ‘Batista, who became President of the Republic four years ago, with our enthusiastic support, now prepares to abandon office as one of the firmest and most sincere democrats of the Americas.’

Promoted to assistant secretary of state, Braden asked Briggs to serve as director of the office of American Republic Affairs. Braden and Briggs did not expect Trujillo to be overthrown any time soon, but they thought democracy was on the march in the hemisphere and all US interests would be served by associating the United States with that march. With a much more democratic Latin American reality in view, such an approach seems obvious. In the mid-1970s, when Proud Servant was written and there were perhaps three democracies
in Latin America, Briggs was less optimistic than he had been three decades earlier. Rather than emphasise his and Braden’s contemporary hopes for a democratic Latin America, Briggs’ recollections stress his concern with American honour in his opposition to Trujillo. They also cast doubt on the efficacy of the methods he and Braden employed and even on the ability of some countries to handle ‘the slippery and complicated machinery of self-government’.

Recognising that merely having relations with a Trujillo, or a Stalin, was bound to effect the credibility of US support for such lofty aims as those of the Atlantic Charter, Briggs sought to keep diplomatic relations cool and to prevent Trujillo from misrepresenting routine acts of collaboration as support for the enslavement of the Dominican people. Insisting on the Dominican government’s compliance with the terms of an agreement under which the US government purchased footstuffs, Briggs successfully attacked Trujillo’s pride and pocketbook simultaneously. ‘After irritating days of procrastination and unkept Dominican promises, during which crops were being harvested and pitiful prices paid to the Dominican farmers, the embassy solved the matter by buying space in the local newspapers and publishing the price schedule, “in accordance with paragraph so-and-so of the contract”.’

Reporting to Washington, in January 1945, Briggs argued that Trujillo’s record of sudden, ruthless, and repressive measures against his opposition had to be taken into account in establishing US policy toward the Dominican Republic. ‘He has established that record with abundant proof insofar as the citizens of this country are concerned, and the shadow of apprehension lies across the land.’ Dominicans gathered together spoke with caution, Briggs continued, and the sound of laughter was rarely heard on the streets of the capital. The most representative gesture of a Dominican citizen was looking over his shoulder to see whether he was being overheard.

In 1946 Alger Hiss sent a transmitting note to the UN secretary-general which, in violation of standing instructions, had not been cleared by anyone in Briggs’ office. Together with the note was a copy of the Annual Report of the Governor of the Canal Zone, Hiss having decided that the Canal Zone was a ‘non-selfgoverning territory’ under Article 73 and Article 74, Chapter XI, of the Charter. There followed an intense argument involving Hiss, Dean Acheson and Briggs. An outraged secretary of state, holding Briggs responsible, treated him to several paragraphs of straight South Carolina cussing. ‘Whether Alger Hiss was a Communist is beyond the scope of this writing,’ Briggs concluded, but no one trying to poison relations between the US and Panama ‘could have devised a move better calculated to implant the virus of “colonialism” into the tissue of relations.’

Throughout his many missions, Briggs made friends outside normal diplomatic circles by going hunting. He was an excellent shot and, having trained himself to shoot from his left shoulder while chasing woodcock in Maine, an unusually quick one. Admired by many in the military for his prowess with a gun, he did not shrink from insisting on civilian supremacy, or opposing arms sales to Latin American countries on the grounds that US planes and machine guns, in an inevitable revolutionary attempt, ‘would rake the Plaza de la Independencia, massed with local citizens whose blood would fill the gutters’.

For those convinced that the accidents of who knew whom where, and when they had done so before, are periodically decisive to diplomacy, Briggs provides
a dense description of people and places, often with a sharp sense of humour. For example, having rented a house with John Moors Cabot in Peru in 1927, and knowing that Cabot’s next post after Lima was Santo Domingo, in the days when Trujillo was whetting the blade of his guillotine, Briggs found in Cabot a strong supporter in 1944: ‘To have a competent and sympathetic colleague in the home office in Washington was of inestimable value when I was in Trujillo’s lair.’

Yale University  
STEVEN SCHWARTZBERG


Unlike Mao, Rafael Trujillo regularly brushed his teeth. At least that is a reasonable inference from Eric Paul Roorda’s account of the way the Dominican dictator absorbed the Marines’ emphasis on cleanliness, discipline and public works projects and remade it into part of the foundation of thirty-one years of absolutist rule. The only crime syndicate in history which issued postage stamps with errors-made-to-order as John Roche once put it.

The undeniable brutality of Trujillo’s rule is most strikingly evident in the genocidal campaign waged against Haitians in the Dominican Republic in 1937. Thousands were murdered. Most of them killed with machetes, others thrown into the sea. Thousands more, having made it across the border, died as displaced persons from malnutrition and disease. Seven months after the massacre Trujillo boasted that he had been the only Dominican with the ‘inflexibility of will’ to ‘confront’ the ‘Haitian question’. Even M’sie, the Haitian gardener at the US Legation was made to vanish. Roorda brings new details to light about this sickening episode and about the way US officials helped Trujillo redirect international attention towards his offer to accept 100,000 Jewish refugees (a few hundred of whom were actually resettled in the Dominican Republic).

The question of how democracies should deal with ‘the dictator next door’ is one which recurs throughout Roorda’s book with its nuanced sense of the tension in US policy between a commitment to nonintervention (on political, economic and moral grounds) and a belief that dictators should be held accountable to moral standards and democratic government encouraged. Like Paul Clark in *The United States and Somoza*, Roorda emphasises the autonomy of a dictatorship maintained by an army created and trained by the United States. His account leaves no doubt that the State Department did not want Trujillo to seize power, attempted to prevent him from doing so and dealt with him primarily because he had effective control of population and territory. The Legation went so far as to request a warship in its effort to stop Trujillo, but received no support for the idea from Washington. A frustrated John Moors Cabot, first secretary of the Legation, pointedly asked Washington whether it was advisable ‘for the American government to show what appears to be marked favor to a thoroughly unpopular, unscrupulous, and perhaps unstable government, or even to bolster it?’

Throughout the period Roorda covers, from 1930–1945, Trujillo was able to find friends in the US military and often in other sectors of US society
including in the US Congress, occasionally by the expedient of paying cash for support. Like Bernardo Vega, in *Los Estados Unidos y Trujillo*, Roorda emphasises the extent to which a measure of cultural affinity united Trujillo with his supporters in the US military. While the consistency of US military attitudes should be stressed, the fluctuation in attitudes among State Department representatives is also worthy of attention. Roorda suggests that State Department attitudes altered largely in response to changes in US security interests, becoming less cordial as there was less of a security threat and more cordial with the onset of WWII and then, again, with the onset of the Cold War. While there is undoubtedly something to this argument, a careful chronology suggests that it is problematic. As developments in Europe seemed increasingly threatening in the late 1930s, US official attitudes did become much more cordial. In 1940, the United States even relinquished one of its major sources of leverage over the Dominican economy, the customs receivership established in 1907 and continued under the Convention of 1924 after the Marines departed. By 1942, Ambassador Avra Warren was immersing himself in the social life of the capital with the help of a staff four times larger than that of the 1930s. ‘His reports,’ Roorda observes, ‘revealed no self-consciousness about the role he placed in the nationalist, personalist spectacles of the Trujillo regime.’ By June 1944, however, Ambassador Ellis Briggs had arrived on the island and was seeking to distance his embassy from the regime in much the same way as the US embassy in Cuba had recently succeeded in distancing itself from Fulgencio Batista. Reporting from Ciudad Trujillo in November 1944, Briggs indicated some concern that the Confederación de Trabajadores de América Latina (CTAL) might become ‘an instrument in the foreign policy of Soviet Russia’. Like his friend and colleague, Spruille Braden, the US ambassador to Havana, Briggs was opposed to Trujillo and other Latin American dictatorships in part because of the increasing strength of anticommunist and ultimately Cold War considerations. As Braden noted in April 1945, communism might prove the most dangerous and insidious threat of all to the US mode of life and to democracy—‘And it is well to bear in mind that the laws of action and reaction cause the dictators to prepare the most fertile soil for that disruptive ideology.’ Having been briefly ousted by Nelson Rockefeller in January 1945, Briggs returned to a position of power later that year as newly promoted Assistant Secretary of State Spruille Braden asked him to be his right hand man, the director of the office of American Republic Affairs. The Cold War and anticommunism were not behind Rockefeller and Warren’s opposition to Briggs. If anything, Briggs and Braden were more militant cold warriors. People with very similar interests and ideologies can come to very different strategies for advancing their goals and that element of choice, of individual human agency, should always be kept in mind.

In 1961, there was an average of one sculpture of the Generalissimo for every ten square miles of Dominican territory. The capital city had been renamed after him and his name, and the names of members of his family, were attached to streets, plazas, bridges and parks in towns and cities across the land. The phrase ‘Dios y Trujillo’ began appearing on Dominican documents in 1935 and also in a neon sign over the vice president’s house. Sedition laws were strict and the media firmly censored. It is therefore surprising that the 1940 Charlie Chaplin film, *The Great Dictator*, was shown. A 1936 newsreel on the dictatorship was banned.
The dark side of Trujillo’s rule might best be illustrated not with his renaming the Dominican capital after himself, but rather with his renaming the border town of Dajabon after Franklin Roosevelt. It was in Dajabon, on the night of 2 October 1937, that Trujillo personally launched a campaign to kill every Haitian in the Dominican Republic with a fanatic address to a dinner party.

The opposition of Braden and Briggs to the Trujillo dictatorship was given its most succinct and biting form in an Aide Memoire of 28 December 1945 which reads in part: ‘This Government has over the past years observed the situation in the Dominican Republic and has been unable to perceive that democratic principles have been observed there in theory or in practice. The foregoing conclusion is based upon lack of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly, as well as upon the suppression of all political opposition and the existence of a one-party system. To furnish large amounts of ammunition in the face of such a situation might be held to constitute both intervention in the internal affairs of the Dominican Republic and support for the practices just mentioned.’ According to Roorda, although this aide memoire circulated widely in the United States, its existence was not publicly disclosed in the Dominican Republic until 1953. In 1946, Trujillo suggested publishing both the aide memoire and the Dominican response, a suggestion which was rejected by Braden and his advisors on the grounds that their policy was already coming in for a lot of criticism over their stance toward Argentina where Juan Perón was claiming that he owed a third of his votes to Braden’s propaganda. In short, Braden flinched.

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STEVEN SCHWARTZBERG


Sultanistic Regimes combines a theoretical discussion of the concept of sultanism and a historical analysis of sultanistic regimes in six countries. The writing is dense but clear and the combination of conceptual discussion and historical analysis makes it a very useful book for academic research and class assignments.

The first three chapters of the book survey the history, evolution and definition of the concept of sultanism and of sultanistic regimes, Linz adopting the concept of sultanism to refer to political regimes that are neither totalitarian nor authoritarian in a classical sense. The main difference among these regimes lies in the rulers’ conception of politics and exercise of power. The term sultanism was originally used by Max Weber to refer to extreme cases of patrimonialism. In the 1950s, Linz adopted the term to differentiate authoritarian regimes such as those of Franco in Spain and Trujillo in the Dominican Republic with an excess of the ruler’s discretion in the use of power.

Contemporary sultanistic regimes can be defined primarily in terms of the power of personal rulership, but the power of the ruler and the loyalty toward him derives not from an ideology or special charismatic qualities, but by a mixture of fear and rewards to loyalists. The ruler exercises power to an extreme and without restriction. However, no sultanistic regime operates perfectly, meaning that not all elements of legal-rational order or of a legitimising ideology...
are absent. Also, no empirical reality matches perfectly a conceptual definition of sultanism, the reason why the editors claim than it would be preferable to speak of sultanistic tendencies rather than sultanistic regimes, yet they mostly use the latter in the book.

Under sultanistic rule the distinction between regime and state is markedly less clear than in other regimes. Power is concentrated in the hands of the ruler and his close associates (family members in particular), there is an absence or perversion of legal-rational norms, there is rampant corruption, and relationships are regulated through privileges and favours. Personalism and dynasticism are specific to sultanism. When experts come in and some rationalisation is in place, this is basically to enhance the power of the ruler and his associates. Because sultanistic leaders lack charisma, they surround themselves with charismatic symbols. Unlike totalitarianism, sultanism does not define an ideology as a driving force in setting a sense of mission. Constitutional hypocrisy is also a defining characteristic of sultanism, as is the narrow social bases of support. Factors leading to the emergence of sultanistic regimes are macrostructural and institutional, but the presence or absence of individuals who can become sultanistic leaders also matters. The editors argue that sultanistic regimes have been few in number and most have by now disappeared.

The second part of the book presents six country studies: the Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic written by Jonathan Hartlyn, the Batista regime in Cuba by Jorge Domínguez, the Somoza regime in Nicaragua by John Booth, the Duvalier regime in Haiti by David Nicholls, the Pahlavi regime in Iran by Homa Katouzian, and the Marcos regime in the Philippines by Mark Thompson.

Hartlyn argues that of all the cases considered in the book, the Trujillo regime may be the closest to the ideal type definition of sultanistic regime given Trujillo’s excessive personal rule and the mixture of fear and rewards that characterized the regime. The argument might be correct, but the fact that the book does not indicate precise measures of sultanism makes it hard to establish which of the cases analysed is the most sultanistic.

The country chapters are organised to make the point that the regimes studied were sultanistic based on the definition provided in the first chapters of the book. They are all well written and well argued, and provide concise summaries of the regimes studied.

What remains unclear is whether the six case studies constitute the complete list of sultanistic regimes in the twentieth century, or if sultanistic tendencies were (or are) still present in other regimes in a significant way. It is also unclear at what level sultanistic tendencies make a political regime sultanistic. These are typical methodological problems of any attempt to clarify the meaning of a concept and find all the possible cases that match it. The bias of the book is the attempt to find the sultanistic tendencies in those regimes that appeared to be sultanistic at the outset. This strategy does not help to clarify the question of when a regime becomes truly sultanistic. Yet, this problem aside, the volume makes a significant contribution to political theory and comparative politics by providing a comprehensive definition of the concept of sultanism and a discussion of six cases that show important sultanistic tendencies. The book is indeed required reading for all those interested in the study of authoritarian regimes.

Temple University

Rosario Espinal

*Los partidos políticos en la República Dominicana* is a welcome addition to the growing literature on the Dominican Republic. The book is organised in two parts. The first has four chapters that examine party competition in the Dominican political system. The first three chapters provide a historical account of political development, the formation of political cleavages and the development of weak party organisations. They include discussions of political factionalism during the formation of the Dominican nation-state and the obstacles to party development, the anti-party nature of the Trujillo dictatorship and the emergence of a pluralist party system in the post-Trujillo period. The last chapter of this first part provides a comprehensive analysis of the Dominican electoral system and political representation through the electoral process. The section ends with a very valuable summary of electoral data from 1962 to 1998.

The second part of the book provides an organisational study of the dominant political parties in the Dominican Republic: the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), the Reformist Party (later renamed Social Christian Reformist Party – PRSC), and the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD). The author examines the origins and organisational development of these parties following a Weberian approach of leadership development.

The book seeks to answer two fundamental questions: when did political parties emerge in the Dominican Republic, and how well organised were these parties? To answer these questions Jiménez Polanco uses a multi-dimensional methodological strategy, combining historical, institutional and electoral analysis. In terms of the development of political parties, Jiménez Polanco departs from the views of other authors by emphasising the anti-party nature of the Trujillo regime. The logical conclusion of this argument is that political parties truly emerged in the Dominican Republic in the post-Trujillo period, that is after 1961.

The discussion of electoral politics is rich in content and data. Three main issues are examined here: the electoral strategies of the three main parties, particularly from the 1970s to the 1990s; the electoral cleavages that emerged at different times during this period and the transformation of a bi-party system into a tri-party system; and the nature of the relationship between the electoral system and the party system. The author argues that the fragility of the electoral system and the limited institutionalisation of political parties are salient features of Dominican democracy.

The analytical core of the book is the study of the organisational structure of the dominant political parties in the Dominican Republic. Using the theoretical insights of A. Panebianco and S. Huntington, the author provides a detailed account of the origins and development of the PRD, PRSC and PLD. The analysis is organised around the concept of party leadership. Two types of party leadership are examined: pure and situational charismatic leadership. Jiménez Polanco argues that the three main parties have been organised around charismatic leaders, but that this charismatic leadership varies. The PRSC and the PLD were characterised by pure charismatic leadership, that is, a type of leadership where the charismatic leader has high discretionary power and enjoys...
much support vis-a-vis other party leaders. Joaquín Balaguer and Juan Bosch are the classic examples here. In the case of the PRD, the charismatic leadership of José Francisco Peña Gómez is situational, that is, his power is shared with other party leaders. These characteristics, however, are not static. While the PRSC has retained the pure charismatic leadership style with Balaguer, the PLD experienced a change when Bosch retired from politics in 1994 and new cadres emerged as party leaders. The PRD, in turn, in order to overcome its internal factionalism of the 1980s moved in the early 1990s to a more pure charismatic leadership style around the figure of Peña Gómez.

In terms of their levels of institutionalisation these parties vary. The PRD has the most complex and diverse organisational structure and it is a mass-based party. The PLD has a more centralised, but nonetheless well-structured, party organisation led mostly by middle-class professionals. The PRSC is a mass-based party that functions around the figure and decisions of Balaguer; it is what Jiménez Polanco calls a movimentista party. A main conclusion of the book is that while these parties have institutionalised, it has been through strategies and practices that rely heavily on the authoritarian culture and practices of the Dominican elites.

Overall, the book provides enough historical information, quantitative data and analytical insights to understand not only political party development in the Dominican Republic, but also to assess the possible course of action of political parties in the years to come as the charismatic leaders that sustained those parties disappear. The book is a must read for students of Dominican politics and comparative party development in Latin America.

Temple University  


Félix Matos Rodríguez and Linda C. Delgado’s edited volume, *Puerto Rican Women’s History: New Perspectives* is a precious addition to the scholarship about Puerto Rican women. This book is an important and timely publication for several reasons. First, it is a book about Puerto Rican women’s history written by historians, a rarity given that so much of Puerto Rican women’s history has been written by non-historians. Second, the volume recognizes the need to generate research that sees women as actors and that accounts for gender as a dimension that organises social, political, economic and cultural life in the island and Puerto Rican communities in the United States. Clearly, these historians are not only on top of the discipline’s newest intellectual trends, but future research about Puerto Rican history that ignores women and gender will be looked on as severely deficient. Third, as the title of the book indicates, the volume offers new perspectives on neglected topics such as domestic work, prostitution and the involvement of women in city politics. The book also offers new insights on topics that have been subject to a great deal of research, such as the suffrage movement, early working women’s history and migration. Finally, this book connects the lives of Puerto Ricans in the United States with those in the island, an important corrective to previous historical work.
All the essays in the volume are informative and insightful, but given space limitations I will only give a brief synopsis. Félix Matos Rodríguez’s essay offers an excellent overview of the intellectual history underlying the scholarship on Puerto Rican women. The essay by Altagracia Ortiz provides a synopsis of the struggles of working women in Puerto Rico and East Coast Puerto Rican communities. Matos Rodríguez also analyses the history of domestic work to show how race, class and gender shaped the lives of women domestic workers after the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico. José Ramos Flores shows how Spanish colonialist tolerated prostitution, but under US colonial rule, the full force of the colonial judiciary was used to eradicate prostitution because it was viewed as a health and moral threat to US interest. Juan José Baldrich describes the feminisation of cigar-making in Puerto Rico and how a gender division of labour segregated men and women in the workplace. María de Fátima de Barceló-Miller’s essay explores the class and gender divisions existing within the suffrage movement in Puerto Rico. Gladys M. Jiménez-Muñoz uses the suffrage movement to show how propertied and educated Puerto Ricans sought to maintain their class and gender privileges by advocating the right to vote for only educated women. She also shows how the ideology of natural differences was deployed to frame the debate of women’s right to vote. Carmen Whalen juxtaposes the narratives of Puerto Rican women who migrated to Philadelphia to the narratives used by policy makers in dealing with Puerto Rican migrants in the USA. She found that the stories of Puerto Rican women challenged our current conceptualisation of what constitutes ‘labour migrations’ whereas policy makers subscribed to stereotypical views of Puerto Rican women to further their own agenda. Linda Delgado uses the letters and documents of Rufa Concepción Fernández, wife of Jesús Colón, to show how gender works in the migration process, but the essay offers more to our understanding of how a man and a woman negotiated their relationship across a transnational space at the turn of the century. Muñiz Mas explores how home needleworkers were displaced by governmental efforts to modernise the Island. Finally, Mary Frances Gallart describes the political struggles of Ogdulia Velázquez, the first woman elected mayor of the town of Guayama.

Some critical issues need to be raised, but that in no way diminishes the impact and contribution of the present volume. The book contains two review essays, yet neither offers any insight on the methodological issues underlying this scholarship. As historians aware of the need for future research, this is a critical omission. A discussion of the range of methodologies used and the sources available to historians could generate the interest of future historians, thus infusing the discipline with the ‘new blood’ needed to maintain this kind of research for generations to come.

In the opening essay Matos Rodríguez observed that the emergence of a women’s history field in Puerto Rico coincided with the shift in the field toward gender studies. He felt that ‘it is unclear if in Puerto Rico the historical research will move totally in the direction of gender studies’ (p. 24). As this book shows, generating accounts from a ‘woman’s perspective’ and a ‘gender perspective’ are not mutually exclusive propositions. Writing history from a woman’s perspective is an important corrective given so much history has been written from an androcentric perspective. In addition, women’s history represents an important, though not exclusive, component of the scholarship on gender. Similarly,
accounts that understand gender not as proxy for women, but as an organising
dimension of social life, like class and race, are needed as well. The tension
between these two approaches is a critical aspect of the new scholarship on
gender. Clearly, this admirable book has shown how research can (and must)
account for both.

Illinois State University


This pithy book offers a theoretical analysis illustrated by three case studies. Its
subject is important: what kind of politics can we expect from rural Mexico
following the neoliberal restructuring of the land reform sector? Otero’s
approach is to revisit the Mexican debate on the ‘agrarian question’ of the 1970s
and 1980s. He neatly exposes the class reductionist logic of both the *campeñista*
position, associated with neo-Chayanovians such as Arturo Warman – a cabinet
minister in the neoliberal administrations of Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo
– and the *descampeñista* or *proletarista* position, associated with theorists such as
Roger Bartra, who adapted traditional Leninist ideas to the specific circumstances
of postrevolutionary Mexico. Another demonstration that political behaviour
cannot be deduced from an objectivist account of economic class position might
seem redundant. Yet Otero does more than recite familiar postmodernist litanies.
His aim is to retain class analysis within a formulation of the way *political*
class formation reflects relationships between economic class processes (rather
than ‘positions’), regional cultures, forms of state intervention and leadership types.
Much of the discussion of the book is historical. In contrasting the experiences
of different regions. Otero provides insights into how apparently similar
economic situations give rise to different political responses.

The regions chosen are La Laguna in Coahuila, show-piece of ‘radical’
agrarian reform under President Carréndez, Atencingo in Puebla, which illustrates
Carréndez’s willingness to adapt ideology to regional power structures, and the
Yaqui Valley of Sonora. The latter is important for the book’s overall argument
because Otero regards it as a ‘success story’ in efforts to build autonomous
capitalist popular-democratic organisations. What the cases have in common
is that rural populations were proletarianised before the land reform and
collective ejidos were established, although these differed in the extent to which
they were expressions of grassroots political empowerment that subsequent
administrations sought to expunge. Much of the analysis is based on secondary
sources well known to specialists, though many are unavailable in English, and
Otero offers his assessments of issues that are contentious. His own fieldwork
plays a more prominent role in the chapter on Atencingo, which includes results
of a questionnaire on *ejidatarios*’ evaluation of the new situation created by the
privatisation of the sugar mill. The principal aim is to provide the kind of
synthesis that eludes attempts to generalise from a single region. The exposition
is clear and insightful, making the book valuable to teachers, and the theoretical
argument could guide analysis of developments in other regions with different
histories.
A key issue is the future political direction of a growing mass of semi-proletarian households in an increasingly polarised rural society. Otero notes that the position of both ‘peasant entrepreneurs’ and all but the largest agro-export capitalists is fragile, with the influence of the latter on state policy not conducive to more equitable rural development. Reform of capitalism through alliances between postcapitalist producer organisations and popular-democratic parties that respect their autonomy is seen as the way forward, since the dead hand of the corporatist state is foregrounded in the analysis of the past. Otero suggests that the alliance of state and capital offers poor prospects for labour union struggles in most of rural Mexico, and that capitalist development does not, in any event, offer comprehensive solutions to problems of lost livelihoods. What the book does not give us is a great deal of evidence about the likely future success of the forms of rural politics that Otero favours. The author has no illusions about the nature of the official programmes targeted at smaller rural producers, but the book pays little attention to the larger political-economic or geo-political context of Mexico’s transformation: even the travails of the sugar industry are discussed without reference to corn syrup. The analysis is, as the author concedes, limited in its discussion of the ‘leadership types’ variable. Efforts to historicise ‘regional culture’ are limited by reliance on large-scale survey data and structural categories. Much of the time the state appears as a ‘thing’, over-readily separable from ‘civil society’ and its organisations. The best pieces of political analysis in the book are those that unpack the networks, alliances and factions that influence historical political outcomes. Despite a substantial research effort, we are still far from achieving any clear picture of the way rural Mexico is changing. Issues such as the role of the drugs economy and tourism development seem important in many regions. The postcapitalist producer organisations highlighted in this book are, as the author recognises, no more the whole of the story than the indigenous rights movements that he regards as having received more than their due share of attention. Yet it is certainly to be hoped that the author will continue his explorations of these organisations. He has demonstrated with particular elegance that conventional distinctions between ‘peasant’ and ‘proletarian’ demands have been unhelpful for understanding Mexican experience.

University of Manchester

John Gledhill


This book is an analysis of the antinuclear movement’s struggles to halt the construction of the Laguna Verde plant in the Mexican state of Veracruz. The discussion includes the Veracruz antinuclear movement generally but focuses more on the women’s organisation, the Madres Veracruzanas. Theoretically, the central question concentrates on the usefulness of the New Social Movements (NSM) approach in understanding the development of the movement (both generally and the Madres specifically). In looking at the women’s activism from a gender perspective, however, García Gorena also discusses feminist theories of maternalist political action. The discussion of the maternalist elements are
interesting since García Gorena demonstrates both the strengths and weaknesses of such an approach, and highlights the class implications of this particular movement. She demonstrates that many of the women activists gain significantly in terms of personal empowerment, which is seen as an important part of constructing citizenship and challenging the clientelism endemic in the Mexican political system. But although personal empowerment is important, it is difficult to detect the larger transformation necessary for democratisation – an inevitable theme of the book since NSMs are seen as part of a democratisation process. Although the Madres have contributed to highlighting the authoritarianism of the PRI in this particular decision-making process, the style of the Madres makes one wonder about their own democratic credentials. They are extremely jealous of their autonomy and have a narrow, albeit evolving, concept of motherhood – both of which contributes to their exclusionary manner. They reject women from the popular classes whose style they feel is at odds with their own. While García Gorena suggests that this protectiveness demonstrates elements of adherence to an NSM approach where autonomy is seen as paramount, I would suggest distance from other political actors, especially parties, is apparent in many types of grassroots organisations in Mexico, not just NSMs.

While the case study is undoubtedly interesting, there are a number of problems. First, the structure is not helpful in developing the argument. The conceptual discussion is confined to the introduction and then two final chapters, but the other five chapters are largely descriptive accounts of the events. This does not help the reader understand how the movement fits into the NSM paradigm or the developments in gender consciousness. The description is simply not enough to sustain the reader's interest without some indication of how this is adding to the conceptual debate. Furthermore, the chapters lack conclusions, which leaves each instalment hanging. Unfortunately, the conceptual discussion in chapter nine contains needless repetition, which detracts from its interest.

Secondly, the feminist theory and social movements theory are largely treated separately and there is little integration of the two: this seems odd given the wealth of material concerning women's participation in social movements. The discussion on feminism raises some interesting points highlighting tensions in examining motherist movements, but the debate is not really taken further. For example, what does this movement tell about difference and equality approaches? With regard to the usefulness of the NSM approach, the introduction sets up the debate in terms of whether the antinuclear movement represents an example of a NSM, contrasting this approach with a resource mobilisation approach. But the preferred option of the NSM approach combined with the political processes approach (drawing on Doug McAdam's work) does not appear until the conclusion. It would have been more helpful if the whole discussion was posited in these terms so the reader could identify the political processes as s/he goes along. As it stands a central argument of the book regarding the usefulness of the NSM approach, is largely redundant.

Thirdly, the book seems somewhat dated. The idea that the debate is an 'either/or' scenario between NSM and resource mobilisation has not been salient for a number of years because researchers have identified, as García Gorena does here, that there are elements of both. [Related to this, I was surprised that the reference to Feijóo's work was the 1989 version rather than the 1994 one that addresses some of the concerns raised by García Gorena.] In Mexico particular
movements have used a number of approaches, many of which seem contradictory, to achieve their ends. The book gives the impression that the PhD was written a number of years ago and updated for publication here. It is interesting to look again at social movements since attention has shifted to the electoral arena in recent years, particularly in Mexico in the wake of various reforms, but it doesn’t really take the debates further. There is some useful and interesting material here, but such rich empirical data require more rigorous analysis.

University of Liverpool


Marcelo Suárez-Orozco has gathered in this volume some of the best researchers and thinkers on contemporary aspects and facets of the Mexican immigration experience. The subject to date has usually been analysed from the perspective of a single discipline. Crossings is organised in such a way as to address general trends and specific details. An array of issues is presented by section, with two or more essays providing in-depth analyses, followed by the reactions and opinions of an expert commentator. In this manner, a variety of insights make for some rather stimulating and cutting-edge forays.


Packed with new information and modes of analysis, the authors in Crossings raise many new questions (e.g. Myers’ focus on the second generation) and underscore old interpretations (e.g. Baker et al. on the demographic momentum of immigration). Especially useful is the introductory chapter by the editor in
which he contextualises key themes and processes. This overview deftly utilises and weaves in many of the other writers’ analyses and interpretations, but it also stakes out positions of its own. For example, starting with some startling demographics showing that by 2010 Hispanics (roughly two-thirds of whom are Mexicans) will constitute nearly 25 per cent of the population of the United States, Suárez-Orozco follows with some interesting observations on transnationalism, multiculturalism (and the need for cultural literacy today), and the gains and losses associated with immigration. One weakness in this essay, and indeed the rest of the book, is the lack of attention to how drug trafficking has confounded the issue of immigration in the modern era and especially affected the border region and border crossings (the commentary after Chapter 11 on border control is the rare exception, but only passing references are made).

While these articles are full of information and worthy of our attention, some of the commentaries provide challenging questions. Coatsworth, for instance, points out that real wages (in terms of buying power) for immigrant labour today are about the same level as in earlier decades. It is also important to underscore that underemployment is still a concern among Mexicans in general; educational attainment may have improved but commensurate increases in hiring power remain stagnant. Another commentary by Smith, at the end of Ch. 4, emphasises why we need to look carefully at generational change, a subject dealt with in more detail by Myers. While the points made in this exchange on generational status are generally correct, it would have helped if the authors, primarily Myers, could have tipped his hat to the importance of qualitative, ethnographic data to help contextualise the excellent quantitative data in his analysis. When Myers states that the second generation are doing better than native-born Mexicans, he neglects to mention that the situations and conditions of adaptation and formation of an ethnic identity today are much improved over previous decades and generations. Most researchers acknowledge that immigrants arrive with high expectations and are willing to work to get ahead, but the climate of opportunities and modes of facilitation must be in place.

Overall, however, this reader provides a wealth of information and insights that would be useful in introductory and/or advanced courses in urban studies, migration and immigration, urban education, urban sociology, urban anthropology, Chicano/Latino studies and Latin American studies.

University of California, Los Angeles

JAMES DIEGO VIGIL

Rita Arditti, Searching for Life: The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo and the Disappeared Children of Argentina (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), pp. xvi + 235, $45.00, $17.95 pb; £35.00, £13.95 pb.

In a personal quest to ‘bear witness’ Arditti conveys the life’s work of twenty women who have lost children and grandchildren to the dirty war waged by the military upon the population of Argentina in the 1970s and 1980s. It is told with narrative flair and will enthuse students in search of case studies, while it makes no claim to develop theory from the experiences presented.

Searching for Life provides the first detailed account of the work of the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo in English, a group which has for too long
lived in the shadow of the Madres, who have had a number of publications devoted to them. Recognition was overdue to the Grandmothers and is to be welcomed as their apparently narrower objectives have met with comparative successes socially, judicially and psychologically in the lives of the survivors of the state terrorism of the 1970s. The power of the account comes from telling the story of the Grandmothers as they present it, accompanied by extended quotations. The same technique is used with all those involved in the story, from geneticists to the recovered children, drawing readers into the text. The testimonies follow Argentine history from the coup of 1976 to the present day.

The passion Arditti feels in reflecting the achievements of the Grandmothers arises from being able to show how just a few ordinary people, here solely women, can make an impact on society. In the case of Argentina, as in many other Latin American countries where a culture of impunity and silence have bred an alleged consensus of moving forward without looking back, they have set themselves the task of dismantling the culture in practical ways. Arditti provides us with an account of their actions and motives which succeeds in being accessible and straightforward. The lives and the events described follow a chronological and linear structure which, as with the whole account, prefers clarity over complexity.

Much of the book is devoted to one of the Grandmothers’ main concerns: identity. Arditti gives a blow by blow account of how the Grandmothers went about convincing members of the academic medical community to research ways into proving parentage without access to the parents. The results were astonishing, as they succeeded in pushing, via national and international contacts, for the creation of a genetic test which ascertained biological ‘grandpaternity’ to over 99 per cent accuracy. There is extended commentary from a number of the scientists involved, both at the genetic and forensic ends of the research required. They all agree on the need for organisations such as the Grandmothers’ to take the lead in demanding socially responsible scientific products and procedures. The issues of identity surrounding the work of the Grandmothers are pursued at some length, and interesting, if dispersed, comparisons drawn with other historical instances of forcibly transferring children in similarly totalitarian attempts at social engineering. Arditti presents the ramifications of their work for the right to identity both within Argentina and beyond. Yet it is the only aspect of the Grandmothers’ work which benefits from being placed in an appropriate context.

Too brief mention is made of their efforts to lobby the Argentine government to create a Genetic Identity Bank, when they provided much of the social impetus, and collaborated in writing the law passed by Congress in 1987 which made it a reality. The process of setting up the Bank and running it has involved a range of political and public communication skills which are arguably central to the social importance of the Grandmothers. The Bank has also been the key element in the restitution of the over 50 children they have found to date, to their biological families. The book’s weaknesses lie in the choice of emphasis, which are twofold: the legal and political aspects of the work of the Grandmothers are not covered adequately, and therefore, not even cursorily put into the context of the national politics, human rights campaigning nor judicial processes where they have made their mark. Even within the aim of conveying testimony, the elements missed are great. For example, the legal process whereby
the amnesty laws of the 1980s (Punto Final, Obediencia Debida, etc.) have been overcome by the Grandmothers to reach the current position of having ex-Junta and other military officers under house arrest awaiting trial is not described, while signifying a major achievement in challenging impunity. The tenacious and meticulously documented research that the Grandmothers have undertaken to bring these convictions about and to prove the systematic nature of the military’s aims with respect to kidnapped children has been central to enabling judicial cases against those responsible. Moreover, at the level of what such directives reveal of the mindset of the military in power, the repercussions for Argentine society remain significant.

The Grandmothers present their work in their own publications as being made up of the following elements: The National Genetic Bank, legal proceedings against those responsible for the disappearance of their relatives and restitution which includes managing the psychological and social impact of revealing the identity of the children ‘disappeared in life’. Using their description as a yardstick, I would say Arditti has covered the first well, as well as collecting valuable information about the women and the motivations which have given rise to the Grandmothers as an organisation. On the other counts the book does not fulfil its promise, and passes up a rare opportunity to analyse more comprehensively the strategies of a human rights organisation which could provide insights into the processes of social change.

Latin America Bureau, London

Gabriel G. Casaburi, Dynamic Agroindustrial Clusters: The Political Economy of Competitive Sectors in Argentina and Chile (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), pp. viii + 234, £42.50 hb.

Gabriel Casaburi’s text steers clear of the rather sterile state versus market and import substitution versus export orientation economic strategy debates, favouring instead an approach which is sectorally focused. Taking his cue from the advanced industrial countries’ (AIC) experiences and literature on ‘flexible specialisation’ and industrial districts that dates back to the mid-1970s, he seeks to explain the current international success of the dairy sector in Argentina and the fresh fruit sector in Chile by looking at their collective sources of dynamism and efficiency. Dynamism results, he opines, not from the inherent nature of the particular production process, but in how the ‘social actors involved…are able to incorporate as many innovations and new technology as possible in whatever they produce’ (p. 10). Efficiency emerges not from Fordist production economies of scale, then, but as a consequence of these social actors who, scattered across myriad firms within the same production cluster, mutually reinforce each other through the pursuit of their own self-interest. Although such reinforcement may be unintentional at the outset, once recognition of this mutual dependence has occurred, it becomes a powerful mechanism in preventing the stagnation or decay of established clusters.

Somewhat surprisingly, despite advocating a Dynamic Production System (DPS) approach, Casaburi fails to acknowledge two seminal influences upon the production cluster debate; Michael Porter’s The Competitive Advantage of Nations
in particular, the national ‘diamond’ (factor conditions, demand conditions, firm strategy/structure/rivalry and related/supporting industries) which ultimately determines the likelihood of DPS success; and Paul Krugman’s *Development, Geography and Economic Theory* (1995) – which, through examining the weight of transport costs in final costs, provides some insights into whether identified DPSs are ever likely to attain a critical mass. This rather glaring oversight apart, Casaburi follows the standard approach, selecting clusters that have prospered as trade liberalisation strategies have become *de rigueur* across the region.

The subsequent chapters (2–7) identify how international markets and the different political and social conditions prevailing in Chile and Argentina have affected government policies towards, and individual/corporate responses of, the Argentine dairy and the Chilean fresh fruit sectors. Although Chapter 2 purports to provide an overview of the international context in which the two sectors operate, it errs in disaggregating to the local DPS level and introducing issues (agrarian reform, inter-firm cooperation, R and D efforts, etc.) which are best dealt with in the subsequent chapters. The land tenure chapter (Chapter 3) is also disappointingly short (16 pages) given the critical importance of the resource to such production clusters. Moreover, it contents itself with quoting a narrow selection of secondary sources (only one post-1985 source is quoted on Argentine agriculture for example) rather than analysing primary Census data or sampling farmers within the two clusters so as to gauge prevailing land tenure arrangements. Innovation and Research and Development are addressed in Chapter 4 largely by detailing state support (via INTA and CITIL in Argentina, INIA and Corfo in Chile) and the recent restructuring of the support system in both countries. While Casaburi is right to recognise the undoubted importance of such aid, individual/corporate innovations are ignored while there is little systematic attempt to quantify the worth of such schemes.

Interfirm co-operation or interaction is critical to the evolution of a production cluster and here (Chapter 5) Casaburi is on somewhat firmer ground, teasing out the differences between cooperation at the level of production, vertical integration and trade associations in the two countries. The chapter also notes, that (i) the neo-liberal inspired relaxation of trade and investment rules make such DPSs vulnerable to transnationalisation, four of the top five firms accounting for 37 per cent of Chilean fresh fruit shipments being in foreign hands and, significantly, (ii) how this may affect cooperation at the local level. The most appealing chapter in the text, at least to this reviewer, however, is that which examines the role of the state in DPS (Chapter 6). In Chile, government intervention ‘jump-started’ fruit production in the late sixties, the sector booming during the seventies and eighties as pro-market policies offered both timely and strong support for export expansion. Argentina offers almost a mirror image; growth prospects for a historically dynamic dairying sector were frustrated during the seventies and eighties by macroeconomic policies which inhibited entrepreneurial ability. These findings allow the author to discern clearly the strong state hand behind a dynamic private sector in the case of Chilean fruit-growing – in contrast to an Argentine dairy cluster which has prospered in spite of ‘less than satisfactory’ public policy (Chapter 7).

In assessing what can be learnt from these two experiences, Casaburi acknowledges that ‘Creating, promoting and stimulating DPS are not easy tasks’
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(p. 205). Much the same can be said of identifying those particular factors which cause some clusters to prosper and others to stagnate or wither away. Yet, while such identification is imperative if Latin American states are to ‘pick winners’ successfully among incipient production clusters, Casaburi’s text unfortunately provides no more than a rather generalised checklist as to what these factors might be.

University of Portsmouth

ANDY THORPE


Even though right-wing populist challenger Joaquín Lavín failed to oust the governing Concertación in Chile’s presidential elections of December 1999, the publication of an in-depth study of the recent evolution of the Chilean Right is especially timely and welcome. The victory of socialist Ricardo Lagos, which had seemed a foregone conclusion only a few months earlier, turned out to be a close-run affair, with less than three per cent of the vote separating him from Lavín. The celebrations of Lagos’s supporters were marked more by relief than euphoria, while Lavín’s cohort expressed shock rather than disappointment at what was ultimately an unexpected loss. During only the third round of presidential elections since General Pinochet left power in 1990, the Chilean right had severely dented the post-Pinochet hegemony of the centre-left.

The key question provoked by the election results, and the underlying theme of Marcelo Pollack’s book, is the extent to which the Chilean right is willing or indeed able to function as the ‘loyal opposition’ that by common consent is crucial to democratic consolidation. In order to address this issue, the book is divided into two parts, the first of which covers theories of the right, the right’s origins and its ascendancy under the military regime. Much of this material is readily available elsewhere, and the first four chapters have something of a plodding, thesis-like feel to them. It is when Pollack starts discussing the regroupings of the right after 1983, when economic disaster and political protest had created a widespread belief that the dictadura duradera would not, in practice, last that much longer, that his prose really comes alive. By far the most interesting section of the book is the second part, in which Pollack discusses the evolution of the right since Pinochet left power. This makes for compelling reading, and presents intriguing material – very little of which was previously available in English, and most of which has only appeared in piecemeal form, if that, in Spanish. Although there are clearly some advantages in having the history of the Chilean right from 1973 onwards all together in one volume, the book might have been strengthened by condensing the earlier, less original material and focussing more on the later period.

Pollack explicitly sets out to challenge traditional perceptions of the right as static and homogeneous, arguing for the need to integrate previous approaches, and to analyse the right in terms of ideologies, movements and coalitions of interests, rather than focusing exclusively on one of these factors. His one questionable theoretical assumption is that right-wing thinking has ‘emerged as [a response] to the left’ (p. 13), which begs a series of chicken-and-egg questions. Overall, however, his framework of analysis yields strong dividends in a careful
examination of the degree of competition between sectors of the Chilean right — mainly the ‘Chicago Boys’ and the gremialistas during the Pinochet period; and the Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI) and Renovación Nacional (RN) subsequently. He is also good on the features apart from ideology that distinguish these groups: institutional locale, generational factors, political base and personal rivalries. Overall, his measured tone is to be especially commended given the controversial nature of his subject matter.

There is one element in Pollack’s interpretation that perhaps warrants further development. He concurs with the standard view that the ‘Chicago Boys’ provided the economic policy for the military regime while the gremialistas offered a political base, and claims that nationalists had only ‘limited influence … at a rhetorical level’ in the introduction into Pinochet’s speeches of concepts such as ‘national unity’, a golden age, Spenglerian decadence and the invocation of Diego Portales as heroic founding father (p. 54). In terms of policy, indeed the nationalists did have little influence. Arguably, however, their notion of a chilenidad based on the allegedly Portalian values of stability and order, together with their critique of parliamentarianism, supplied Pinochet with a plausible rhetoric that enabled him to represent the implementation of monetarist economic and social measures along with the authoritarian ‘politics of anti-politics’ as all part of a coherent project of national restoration. In other words, Pinochet’s revival of portalanismo helped him to insert his programme — which, as Pollack argues, was in many ways ‘based on ideas marginal to the country’s political and cultural traditions’ (p. 3) — into a nationalist discourse.

The question of how closely to identify with the military regime is perhaps the major point at issue between UDI, which presents itself as the civilian inheritor of pinochetismo, and RN, which focuses more on trying to win over the centre ground. Pollack was unlucky in that such a major event as the arrest of General Pinochet in London in October 1998 intervened between the writing of this book and its publication. Neither his conclusion nor a brief postscript on the effects of Pinochet’s detention lead readers to anticipate the strong showing of the right in the latest presidential elections, but this does not invalidate the underlying persuasiveness of an analysis that emphasises how far the Chilean right, especially UDI, remains from developing ‘a well-established and fully democratic party political culture’ (p. 199).

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NICOLA MILLER


In June 1993 five young men of the Amazonian Yanomami were murdered in cold blood by the seven Brazilian garimpeiros (gold prospector-miners) who had invited them to hunt tapir together. A sixth youth escaped and lived to tell the tale. Soon after, Yanomami kinsmen from the same village killed one garimpeiro and wounded another in a revenge attack. Incensed miners then decided to wipe out the entire village of more than 80 ‘Indians’.

Finding that the villagers had fled their huts in fear, the large and heavily armed garimpeiro revenge party came across some of the Yanomami sheltering in a temporary camp. They killed three old people, a young woman from a
neighbouring village, three teenage girls, three young boys, a three-year-old and a baby and fatally wounded another 10-year-old girl. These Yanomani deaths — coming with bitter irony exactly a year after the showcase 1992 Earth Summit in Rio — are the central focus of Jan Rocha’s painful short book. The perpetrators were Brazilians, but in fact the crimes occurred across the border in Venezuela, where more than half the estimated 22,500 Yanomami live.

This is a cautionary tale about what can happen when indigenous peoples and ‘market forces’ meet. Rocha, the BBC and former Guardian Brazil correspondent, places the killings in a context that is often depressingly familiar. She shows the Yanomami to be as vulnerable to the depredations of modernity — epidemics, social dislocation and psychological trauma — as they are exemplary in the sustainability of their culture. At the same time, the lawless activities of the garimpeiros are also mainly those of desperate people pushed by conscienceless political and economic forces beyond their control. Many of the miners are former peasant farmers, encouraged to migrate to Roraima by the Brazilian state’s abortive roadbuilding programme in the 1970s, with the barest of survival prospects until the late 1980s gold rush offered a mirage of prosperity that very few have enjoyed in reality. Enough of the mining community were shocked by the murder of Yanomami elders, women, children and youths to ensure that the identity of the killers became known. Yet very few of them were brought to justice by the inefficient, slow and corrupt criminal justice processes subsequently begun in both Brazil and Venezuela.

The author identifies other actors — Brazilian politicians at various levels, staff of FUNAI (Brazil’s National Indian Foundation), anthropologists and non-governmental organization (NGO) activists — who have worked with the Amazon’s indigenous inhabitants to mitigate the worst impacts of the gold boom. Nevertheless, the ebb and flow of Brazilian state support for protection of Yanomami lands — crucial to their survival and development — has so far failed to provide acceptable basic safeguards.

The book includes a compelling account of the role of small streams and forest trails in Yanomami culture, as conduits of water, news, kinship and memory. No reader could henceforth denigrate these forest people as ‘just hunter-gatherers’; they are also expert forest farmers and skilled guardians of ecological stability. And they have a future as well as a past, with a range of externally supported health and education projects showing them to possess a real sense of purpose and direction.

The Yanomami and other indigenous peoples face appalling obstacles if they are to maintain a cultural identity that, once lost, can never be recovered. A reminder of this — were it needed — appeared in the Latin American press in January 2000, when it was reported that Brazil’s ministries of defence and environment were contemplating a ‘vast project’ of ‘political and physical occupation’ of the Amazon. Yet ultimately the predicament should not be seen as an inevitable tragedy leading to the destruction of a way of life. As their spokesperson Davi Kopenawa is quoted as saying, the Yanomami ‘want to be able to choose and not have change thrust upon them…it is very good when whites come to work amongst the Yanomami to teach reading and writing, how to breed bees, to plant and use medicinal plants….These white people are very welcome. This is for us progress…We want progress without destruction…We need time to learn.’
If this book, published with the support of Survival and Oxfam, helps to promote the less destructive forms of development that are so urgently needed, it will achieve a valuable purpose. The chances of success may appear slim to some, but activists and others engaged in the struggle will continue regardless.

London


The editors, graduate students and specialists on Brazil, collaborated to produce this Latin America Bureau publication of essays, letters, legislation, interviews, and political and social critiques of Brazil’s cultural, political, and social past and present. The book consists of nine sections, five of which are devoted to the past: the Origins and Conquests, Imperial and Republican Brazil, Slavery and its Aftermath, The Vargas Era, and a section entitled ‘Seeking Democracy and Equity’ that covers the early 1960s, military rule, and the onset of redemocratisation. The remaining four sections are topical: Women’s Lives, Race and Ethnic Relations, Realities, and, finally, *Saudades* (a Portuguese word that roughly translates as nostalgia). There is a general introduction to the volume, to each section, and to most of the entries. Signed essays by Brazilian and non-Brazilian specialists focus on specific moments and occurrences that dramatise the dynamics of the period or topic under consideration.

According to the editors, ‘entries were selected because they probe beneath the surface of stereotype, looking, as often as not, behind the scenes or explaining lived experience’ (p. 7). Heavily weighted towards social issues that occasionally overlap in the various sections, the selections offer insights into daily life, the multiplicity of religious beliefs and practices and the lifestyles of disparate and often marginalised social and ethnic groups. In Section One, for example, selections explore the agriculture, daily practices and customs of some indigenous societies, early contacts with Europeans and subsequent abuse by colonisers. Condemned as heathens, Christianisation in missions distant from enslavement and moral corruption is one Jesuit friar’s proposal for the redemption of Indians. Indigenous issues are not limited to Section One, and selections in other sections enable readers to compare and contrast indigenous materials chronologically and thematically. Photographs from 1910 depict young girls in dresses that by failing to disguise their indigenous markings suggest their mixed reception of ‘civilising’ influences. The cultivation and preparation of mandioc by Mundurucú women in the Amazon rain forest in the 1950s attests to the tenacity of kinship and status in the preservation of traditional customs. Further on, official policy and its impact on indigenous survival is the theme of Seth Garfield’s essay on the scandal and ensuing public accusations of genocide that surrounded military investigations into the federal Indian bureau in the 1960s. Enduring contacts with white people and heroic efforts at cultural preservation are examined with reference to the Huni Kui People. Finally, migration and the impact of lifestyles of major urban centres on the Pankararu are the themes of Juliano Spyer’s contemporary findings on urban Indians.
More than forty photographs and drawings are used, albeit sparingly, throughout the volume. With the exceptions of the humorous 1890s photograph of intellectuals at play and shots of prominent political leaders, most depict ordinary people. In the section on Slavery and its Aftermath, Thomas Ewbank’s ‘Cruelty to Slaves’ is illustrated by a drawing of a slave chatting behind a face mask to another slave who carries leg and neck chains. In the section on the Vargas Era, photographs range from rebel soldiers in Recife in 1930 to deplorable working conditions in factories in Vargas’s home state of Rio Grande do Sul. In the countryside, the absence of government measures to ensure pest control made farmers’ efforts to deal with a swarm of locusts futile. A photograph graphically captures the scene as do others that attest to the neglect of the countryside in the same period.

Photographs also document the destruction of billboard shacks in Sao Paulo in the section entitled Realities. The precarious lifestyles of unskilled and semi-skilled workers and the unemployed are highlighted in this section by Carolina Maria de Jesus’s description of being a young Black girl in Minas Gerais and Maria das Dóres Gomes Batista’s ‘My Life’. Sombre testimonies here repeat the trajectory of social inequality from other sections, especially those on Women and Race and Ethnic Relations. They attest to all-too-common reactions on the part of police and public to socially disadvantaged people – avoidance in the case of street children (see ‘Voices from the Pavement’) and elimination, in the case of streetboy turned actor, Pixote. Yet, Jeffrey Lesser’s insightful essay on nonwhite/nonblack immigrants suggests that upward mobility was attainable for outsiders, especially in the cases of those who managed to reconstruct elite discourse on ‘whitening’ and ‘miscegenation’.

The lifestyles, viewpoints and political positions of socially prominent individuals, intellectuals, political elites and, to a lesser degree, the middle classes also have a place in this anthology. Relations between state and society are viewed in Peter Beattie’s essay from the prism of invited guests and their reactions to the victory parade to celebrate the nation’s triumph in the Paraguayan War (1864–1879). Cristina Mehrten focuses on the public-spirited response of the citizens of Sao Paulo during the state’s revolt against Getulio Vargas in 1932. Letters, legislation, interviews and excerpts from articles, highlight the intensifying role of the armed forces in public life from the Vargas era to the gradual process of redemocratisation in Brazil in the 1980s. The inaugural speech of Brazil’s current president, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, sets the economic, political and social agenda for the 1990s. Yet the most crucial and insightful observation into state/society relations in Brazil is contained in the final selection in this section. In his essay ‘Is Brazil Hopelessly Corrupt?’ Roberto da Matta decries ‘a negative relationship between a state that is considered above society and a society that wants to be insulated from the state that rules it’ (p. 296).

The contributions of cultural icons are also registered. The influence of artist Tarsila do Amaral and her role in the Brazilian Modernist Movement is a welcome entry, as are the essays on twentieth century musicians and musical trends – the Música Popular Brasileira and the Jovem Guarda during the military period; public repudiation of Carmen Miranda upon her return from the United States; Almirante’s radio broadcasts, Tropicalia and the Bahian musicians.

Evaluations of church and state relations, the impact of inflation on the daily lives of all Brazilians for most of this century, the significance to the nation of the
construction of Brasília and the recent effects of privatisation should have gained entry into this volume. Yet the hundred-plus selections generally succeed in documenting Brazil’s diversity, contradictions and complexities and should inspire interested readers to consult entire works. Suggestions for additional sources in English and citation of Portuguese materials that are cited in the Acknowledgement of Copyrights will serve as guidelines in this direction.

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Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt (eds.), Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America (London and New York: Zed Books Ltd.), pp. x + 335, £49.95, £16.95 pb; $65.00, $27.50 pb.

The question of why Latin America’s new or re-established democracies are shallow rather than deep is one that is increasingly occupying the minds of researchers. This edited volume makes a contribution to that debate, examining the legacy of terror and violence and its impact on democratic rule in the region. The chapters in the book focus on three aspects of violence: its manifestations, the mechanisms for its perpetuation, and its impact on social and political life.

The editors divide violence into three categories, all within the wider category of state-building: that related to the maintenance of the traditional and oligarchic social order; the modernisation of the state and incorporation of the masses into politics; the difficulties encountered with processes of democratisation. The first has its roots in an exclusionary ‘Iberic and colonial patrimonialism’, which has survived and been modernised under a shallow democratic political order. The second is associated with the rise of the ‘bureaucratic-authoritarian’ regimes of terror in the 1970s. The last is a ‘new violence’, based on social and political exclusion and poverty, and the rise of a new criminality.

The organisation of the chapters, however, does not correspond with this categorisation. Rather, the editors have opted to present the chapters according to three new categories. First, countries suffering from the legacy of violence of recent civil wars are assessed (Mexico, Central America – particularly Guatemala and El Salvador – and Peru). The chapter by Kruijt on Guatemala and Peru is largely descriptive, providing a view of two countries whose ‘Indian soul’ has been separated from their ‘political corpse’ through terror and systemic state and insurgent violence. Degregori’s chapter on Peru provides a thoughtful account of the peculiar ‘purifying’ and totalitarian logic informing Senderista violence, its clash with the traditional Andean culture, which led to a battle between the insurgents and the very people they sought to exalt. By contrast, Oweneel sees the Chiapas insurgents expressing a new pan-Mayan cultural and political affirmation also present in Guatemala, which seeks to restore order and hierarchy threatened by economic liberalisation.

The second section examines countries in which there has been no civil war but which nevertheless suffer from important legacies of violence, a rather diffuse category that includes Mexico, Argentina and Colombia. Knight explores the role of caciquismo in Mexican political life, and discusses the reasons for the durability of the political system in that country. He argues that the PRI regime prevented
the rise of the classic bureaucratic authoritarianism of the Southern Cone less because of its distinctive revolutionary and progressive nature than because it provided a disguised authoritarian solution to the problem of political inclusion ‘coalescing along a single axis of conflict’ and defies attempts to create a coherent intellectual framework to interpret it.

The final section looks at countries with legacies of violence in negotiated transitions to democracy (Chile, Brazil, Mexico and Cuba). The chapter on Chile by Silva illustrates how fear of a return to the chaos of the Allende years has conditioned elite attitudes towards democracy and democratic deepening. Koonings focuses mostly on authoritarian-military violence in Brazil, but emphasises that the perpetuation of traditional forms of power mediation in a context of widespread poverty and social exclusion is the primary cause of continued violence under democracy rather than the legacy of military repression per se. Pansters provides an excellent discussion of the peculiarities of the Mexican case in a dynamic analysis that combines an institutionalist view with an assessment of the actual workings of informal mechanisms of power centred around the personalist figure of the presidency. The chapter on Cuba by Oostindie is more anecdotal and focuses on the crisis and transition rather than on fear, assessed primarily as a factor conditioning attitudes towards change.

The adoption of two categorisations, one according to types of violence and the other to types of cases, is perhaps the weak link in the book, as it does not permit a systematic exploration of the nature and impact of the three types of violence outlined in the introduction. Further, although the epilogue by Torres-Rivas provides an eloquent statement on the deep and varied, if often ‘invisible’ impact of fear on political and social relations, there is no fruitful comparative discussion of the cases at the end of the book. Such a discussion would have permitted a more nuanced understanding of the degree to which fear and legacies of terror condition current political practises on a case-by-case basis, as there are clearly differences between the degree to which that is the case in, say, Argentina or Colombia.

The strongest element in the book is in the detailed analysis and varying presentations and perspectives of each case and chapter. Further, the book has the virtue of including cases which are normally ignored because they do not fit with classic ‘transitology’ models, namely Mexico and Cuba. More importantly, many of the authors place emphasis on the role of mentalities and informal practices for the mediation of political and social relations on the perpetuation of non-democratic forms of power mediation, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the obstacles to democratisation. This comes across particularly powerfully in the chapter by Pansters on Mexico (‘the effectiveness of institutional change and reform is as much conditioned by socio-economic processes as by the cultural codes that regulate the universe of primordial loyalties’) but also in the contributions by Torres-Rivas and Silva.

Albeit unevenly, most of the chapters also address the question of the impact of fear or legacies of violence on current political life. The editors argue that the legacy of fear generated by a violent past and present conditions the process of democratisation in the region, distorting or destroying the citizenship-building capacities of the state. Fear is seen as a generator of peculiar practices and values, while the state is viewed at once as a carrier of this legacy as well as the concomitantly inadequate instrument for its elimination. As Torres Rivas states,
‘the “residues” of the “ancien regime” are not as easily removed as the rubble of the Berlin Wall’. Latin America shows that ‘it is possible to vote with fear in the eyes and in the mind, but not to choose democratically, nor to participate politically.’ Given the resistance to deeper change and reform created by fear and perpetuated by non-democratic and fear-based practices and mentalities, this issue is likely to continue to preoccupy social scientists. Although its organising criteria are not clear and the comparisons are not drawn out in a concluding section as much as one would have hoped, this book provides a thoughtful and well-written introduction to many of the relevant issues surrounding the problems faced by ‘societies of fear’.

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A review by Jeffrey D. Needell of The Mystery of Samba: Popular Music in Brazil by Hermano Vianna was inadvertently printed in both the February and May issues of the Journal. The editors wish to make it clear that the version printed in the May 2000 issue was the correct one.